

Key nutrition challenges



56 560 children under 5 years were **wasted** in Karamoja in 2021

10 260 of them were **severely wasted**



10 200 pregnant and lactating women were **acutely malnourished**

Source: IPC AMN, July 2021.

The availability of recent nutrition data at the national level is highly limited, however an IPC analysis covering the period February 2021–January 2022 was conducted for the Karamoja region.

During the February–July 2021 lean season, one district had Critical levels of acute malnutrition (IPC AMN Phase 4), four districts Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3), and four districts Alert (IPC AMN Phase 2). About 56 600 children in these nine districts were wasted, of whom approximately 10 260 were severely wasted. Around 10 200 pregnant or lactating women were also wasted (IPC AMN, July 2021).

Key drivers

Caring and feeding practices

The heavy burden of work borne by mothers and the stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have been leading causes of inadequate childcare and breastfeeding practices, exposing children to recurrent infections and increased malnutrition incidences. Across Karamoja, around 74 percent of infants under 6 months are exclusively breastfed, decreasing to 54 percent in Kotido, 62 percent in Nabilatuk and 65 percent in Moroto. Fewer than 10 percent of children meet Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) requirements, falling to just 1.5 percent in Moroto and 2.5 percent in Napak. Diets consist mainly of starchy grains, with few children consuming nutritious foods (IPC AMN, July 2021).

Only about 25 percent of women consume foods considered adequate in terms of dietary diversity, falling to 13 percent in Moroto and 17 percent in Napak (IPC, July 2021). High levels of anaemia (both among children as well as among women) are a major public health concern in all districts with 59 percent of children under 5 years anaemic, rising to 74 percent in Amudat district and 72 percent in Kotido. Iron deficiency anaemia resulting from poor quality of food and malarial anaemia are likely contributing factors to acute malnutrition in this region (IPC AMN, July 2021).

Health services and household environment

Low water availability at household level, poor access to improved sanitation facilities and poor hygiene practices expose children to diarrhoea and skin infections, resulting in malnutrition (IPC, July 2021). In Karamoja, even though about 83 percent of households have access to safe water sources (FSNA, 2021), the per capita water use is below the recommended WHO standard of 20 litres per person per day. Only about 30 percent of households meet this minimum water use standard, mainly due to long distances and high queuing time. Access to improved sanitation facilities, particularly toilets, is still very low across the region. Open defecation stands at 60 percent, reaching 70–84 percent in Amudat, Kotido, Napak and Nabilatuk (IPC AMN, July 2021).

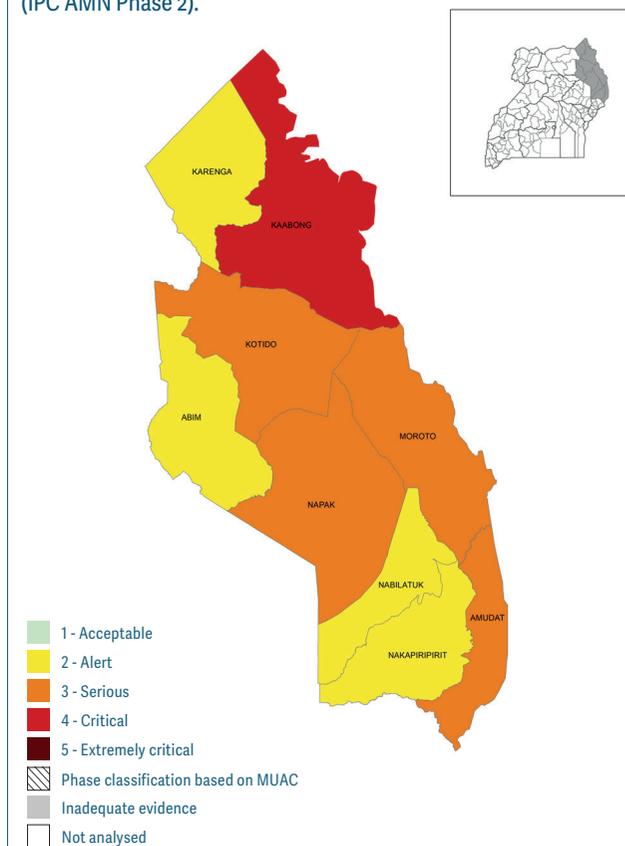
Food security and access to healthy diets

Based on the IPC AFI and AMN analyses in Karamoja, the results indicate a similar classification in Karenga, Nakapiripirit, Moroto, Kotido and Napak. Among the remaining districts, Kaabong and Amudat had high levels of acute malnutrition but low levels of acute food insecurity, with child wasting mainly attributed to very poor quality of food, poor sanitation/latrines coverage, limited use of safe water per capita and inadequate care practices, including poor feeding practices, exposing children to recurrent infections. Nabilatuk and Abim had high levels of acute food insecurity and low levels of acute malnutrition, implying there are child-feeding practices adopted by households that help to slightly reduce the effects of food insecurity and protect children against wasting (IPC AMN, July 2021).

MAP 3.65

IPC acute malnutrition situation in Karamoja, February–July 2021

Of the nine districts in the Karamoja region, Kaabong was classified in Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4), while four districts were in Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3). The remaining were in Alert (IPC AMN Phase 2).



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Source: Uganda IPC AMN Technical Working Group, July 2021.